

What is Claimed:

- 1                   1. A process for manufacturing a soup, comprising the steps of:  
2                   forming an admixture of dry ingredients and a physically-modified, plant-  
3                   derived starch, the starch being able to withstand temperatures of 260° F;  
4                   adding one or more liquid ingredients to the admixture to form a powder  
5                   slurry;  
6                   heating the powder slurry at a sufficient temperature for a sufficient time  
7                   to allow swelling of the starch to form a swelled soup base; and  
8                   adding bulky ingredients to the swelled soup base to form a bulk soup.
- 1                   2. The process of claim 1, further comprising sterilizing the bulk soup to  
2                   form shelf-stable soup.
- 1                   3. The process of claim 1, wherein the heating the powder slurry step is  
2                   performed for about 15 minutes at about 92° C, and a 5% heated slurry of the starch has  
3                   the viscosity of 250-500 BU at 92° C and 425-625 BU at 92° C after 15 minutes.
- 1                   4. The process of claim 1, wherein the starch is made from organically-  
2                   grown corn or maize.
- 1                   5. The process of claim 1, wherein the swelled soup base has a viscosity  
2                   of about 10 cm to about 23 cm.
- 1                   6. The process of claim 1, further comprising, prior to the adding step, the  
2                   step of precooking the bulky ingredients.
- 1                   7. The process of claim 1, further comprising the steps of filling  
2                   containers with the bulk soup and sterilizing by retorting the containers.
- 1                   8. The process of claim 1, wherein the swelled soup base is made by  
2                   heating the slurry to between about 160°F and about 200°F.
- 1                   9. The process of claim 8, wherein the swelled soup base is heated for  
2                   about twenty minutes.
- 1                   10. The process of claim 7, further comprising, prior to the filling step,  
2                   the step of preheating the bulk soup to about 160° F.

1                   11. The process of claim 1 wherein the liquid ingredients are selected  
2 from the group consisting of water, broth, juice, liquid dairy products, and vegetable  
3 purees.

1                   12. A process for filling a plurality of containers with a homogeneous  
2 mixture of soup, comprising:

3                   forming a slurry of a physically modified starch and a liquid;

4                   heating the slurry at a sufficient temperature for a sufficient time to allow  
5 substantial swelling of the starch to form a swelled base;

6                   filling containers with the swelled base; and

7                   sterilizing the swelled base in the containers.

1                   13. The process of claim 12, further comprising, prior to the filling step,  
2 the steps of adding bulky ingredients to the swelled base and mixing to form a generally  
3 homogeneous bulk soup.

1                   14. The process of claim 13, further comprising, prior to the adding step,  
2 the step of precooking the bulky ingredients.

1                   15. The process of claim 14, wherein the bulky ingredients are selected  
2 from the group consisting of vegetables, legumes, barley, bulgur wheat, fruits, beans,  
3 pasta, and rice.

1                   16. The process of claim 12, wherein the slurry is heated to between about  
2 160° F and about 200° F.

1                   17. The process of claim 16, wherein the slurry is heated for between  
2 about 15 and about 30 minutes.

1                   18. The process of claim 12, wherein the slurry is heated for about twenty  
2 minutes.

1                    19. The process of claim 12, wherein the slurry is heated to about 195°F  
2                    for about twenty minutes.

1                    20. The process of claim 13, further comprising, prior to the filling step,  
2                    the step of heating the bulk soup to about 160°F.

1                    21. A process for making organic soup, comprising:  
2                    making a slurry from a physically modified plant-derived starch and a  
3                    liquid;  
4                    heating the slurry at a sufficient temperature and for a sufficient time to  
5                    form a swelled soup base;  
6                    mixing precooked bulky organic ingredients with the swelled soup base to  
7                    form bulk soup; and  
8                    sterilizing the bulk soup.

1                    22. The process of claim 21, wherein the slurry is heated to between about  
2                    160°F and about 200°F.

1                    23. The process of claim 22, wherein the slurry is heated to about 195°F.

1                    24. The process of claim 21, wherein the slurry is heated for about twenty  
2                    minutes.

1                    25. The process of claim 21, further comprising, prior to the sterilizing  
2                    step, the steps of preheating the bulk soup and filling glass containers with the preheated  
3                    bulk soup.

1                    26. A soup product made according to the process comprising the steps  
2                    of:

3                    forming a slurry of a physically modified starch and a liquid;

4                    heating the slurry at a sufficient temperature for a sufficient time to allow  
5                    substantial swelling of the starch to occur, to form a swelled base;

6                    filling containers with the swelled base; and

7                    sterilizing the swelled base in the containers to form a soup product.

1                    27. A soup product made according to the process comprising the steps  
2                    of:

3 making a slurry from a physically modified plant-derived starch and a  
4 liquid;  
5 heating the slurry at a sufficient temperature and for a sufficient time to  
6 form a swelled soup base;  
7 mixing precooked bulky organic ingredients with the swelled soup base to  
8 form bulk soup; and  
9 sterilizing the bulk soup to form a soup product.

1 28. A soup composition comprising:  
2 from about 0.2% to about 4% by weight of a physically modified plant-  
3 derived starch;  
4 a liquid component of about 40% to about 60% by weight; and  
5 about 5% to about 50% bulky ingredients, the bulky ingredients being  
6 suspended in a generally homogeneous composition, wherein the bulky ingredients do  
7 not phase separate and do not settle in the generally homogenous composition for a  
8 predetermined period of time.

1 29. The soup composition of claim 28, wherein the soup composition is  
2 contained in a transparent container and preserved by sterilization for the predetermined  
3 period of time.

1 30. The soup composition of claim 28, wherein the starch is made from  
2 organically-grown corn or maize.

1 31. The soup composition of claim 28, wherein the bulky ingredients are  
2 selected from the group consisting of organic vegetables, legumes, bulgur wheat, barley,  
3 fruits, rice, and pasta.

1 32. The soup composition of claim 28, wherein the soup composition is  
2 organic.